

# ALS disease is rare, 1st US count finds

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(AP)—The U.S. government has issued its first national estimate for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, confirming the devastating disease is rare.

A national search turned up about 12,000 cases.

The numbers reported Thursday translate to 4 cases per 100,000 Americans—similar to estimates from Europe and some small U.S. studies.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report notes it is most common in older white males.

The disease is also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease. It attacks [nerve cells](#) and often starts with muscle twitching and weakness. Roughly three-quarters of people with the disease die within five years.

Its most famous victim was Gehrig, the baseball star who died from it in 1941.

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